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Better Home Living

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!



Home Renovations that Offer the Best Resale Value

Homeowners can use renovations to improve their quality of living, but not all improvements will provide the same return on investment at sale, according to USA Today.

Often, the best returns will come from bringing a substandard home in line with other homes in the area rather than making further improvements to ones that are already the biggest and best.

Basic projects like attic insulation can recoup 116 percent of the cost and more expensive ones like installing a new HVAC, water heater, or windows could be strong choices as well. Importantly, current homeowners will also enjoy the benefits of lower heating and cooling bills before selling the house.

Refreshing the exterior of a home is one of the best ways to improve the curb appeal for a potential buyer. Inexpensive pressure washing and painting projects can remove the aging effects of dirt and mold and make focal areas like the front door shine.

Landscaping, meanwhile, carries over 100 percent return on its cost and can include planting seasonal flowers as well as trimming shrubs and mulching beds. Adding stone veneer or replacing the garage door will both demand over 90 percent return as well.

Inside the home, painting is one of the best bang-for-your-buck improvements that a home seller can make with an estimated 109 percent return. Choose neutral colors that will go with anything, such as gray, to appeal to a broader group of prospective buyers.

Minor updates to bathrooms can have a 102 percent return and can be as simple as regrouting tile, replacing toilets, updating sinks and fixtures, and recaulking the shower. These projects are often simple enough to do without professionals for an even more significant return.

On the road in a lightning storm: What you should do

It's true that people are often safe inside a car during a lightning storm, but the reason for that is dangerously misunderstood.

All-metal cars (not convertibles) can provide protection. This is because of the Faraday Cage effect: Electricity is directed throughout the metal exterior, instead of inside the vehicle. The charge then exits to the ground.

This isn't because of the car's rubber wheels. In fact, there are important limitations to the protection inside a metal car.

Don't touch metal objects in the car. According to weather.com, some current can travel through the electrical systems, including radios, cell phone chargers, GPS units, foot pedals, door handles and the steering wheel.

If a lightning strike disables the car's electrical systems, the air bag can deploy. Lightning can also spark fires in the car's electrical system.

Best advice: Shelter in a substantial building - not in your car. If this isn't possible, pull the car over, turn on the emergency lights and put your hands in your lap. Windows should be up.

June Love

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Mari and Staff

Adopt a Shelter Cat Month: Victorian cat lover changes fate of felines

The fortunes of cats rise and fall.

In ancient Egypt, the cat was adored, even worshipped, but their descendants wander the streets today shunned and feral.

In Europe, the cat was once thought to be the tool of Satan. By the late 1800s, their social position had been slightly elevated to a necessary rat-catching nuisance.

But to the rescue was one man, Harrison Weir, an English gentleman and artist, who brought the cat out of the back rooms and streets and into the salons with a master stroke: He organized the first fancy cat show in 1871.

Weir believed ages of ill-treatment and cruelty had made the cat self-reliant and useful as a mouser. But the cat's beauty and interest were unappreciated, he thought.

Weir's cat shows indeed perked up interest in the feline and prompted the development in 1892 of cat clubs, an idea he later rejected as not being focused enough on the animal.

Nonetheless, by 1900 magazines credited Weir with bringing cats off the streets and into the home.

You could say that Harrison Weir led the way for the cat to become an internet star today.

... someone that could use our services? Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation; you will receive \$50 after their 6th cleaning!

If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your \$50 Bonus!

Thanks in advance for your help and we look forward to sending cash your way!

Pets enhance life, psychologist says

Your pet loves you and you love your pet back.

That single emotional exchange is one of the reasons that pets can encourage a healthy emotional mindset, says psychologist Therese J. Borchard.

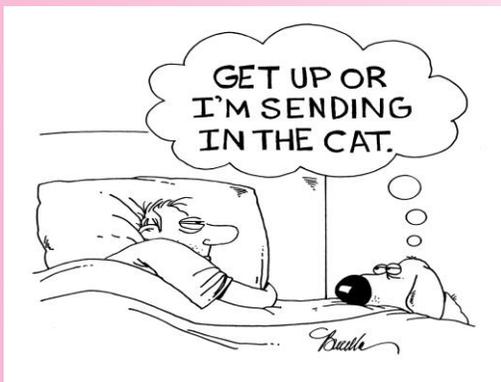
Writing in the World of Psychology, Borchard says the presence of a pet gives structure and responsibility to a human life. Pets must be fed, preferably on a schedule, and tended to, recognizing their need, and our need, for exercise, for example.

They change our behavior. If we wish to collapse disgruntled in a chair at the end of the day, there is that friendly wet dog nose, urging us to a pet and a walk.

Just petting your dog or cat reduces stress-related responses in the brain, according to a study by the University of Virginia.

This distraction can be an effective therapy that stops a person from obsessively ruminating on problems.

And finally, just the feeling of love given and returned, is enough to make life a little more meaningful.



The Best Lemon Bars Ever!

Remember! If you are having a difficult time getting much juice from your lemons, pop them into the microwave for a few seconds. Having lemons at room temperature or a tad warmer, will give you the **best results for juicing**.

Instructions:

1. For the base mix the butter into the flour and sugar.
2. Mix with hands until it clings together.
3. Press into a 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan.
4. Bake at 350°F for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned.
5. For the filling, beat together eggs, sugar and lemon juice.
6. Sift together flour and baking powder.
7. Stir into egg mixture.
8. Pour over baked, cooled crust.
9. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes.
10. Cool and sprinkle with powdered sugar.
11. Cut into bars.

Base:

- 2 cups sifter flour
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup butter

Top/Filling:

- 4 larger beaten eggs
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon lemon rind (optional)

The best values in June

June is a great time to buy movie tickets, produce, and gym memberships, according to Deal News. Many movie theatres will offer special summer movie prices that start in June and discounts on concessions. Prices on fresh produce will likely fall by as much as 50 percent off their winter highs as farmer's markets drive prices down. Gym owners know that potential customers will flock to their facilities during the new year's resolution season, but summer is slow, and exercisers may find discounted rates, free months, and even complimentary training sessions.

The personal data you give away

A fun Facebook quiz pops up: Fun with family names! And pretty soon you are typing in your mother's maiden name.

Congratulations: You just revealed the answer to your bank's security question.

It's bad enough that you just let the app know your name, profile picture, age, sex, birthday, your entire friends list, everything you've ever posted on your timeline, all your photos, your employment history, education, home town and every meme or post you ever liked.

What happens to all this information? Maybe nothing, or maybe everything. It depends on who is asking for it.

More than 17 million Facebook users have clicked on a link that promises to provide a word cloud of your most used words. Created by a South Korean company, the app gathers every conceivable snippet of information. This is extremely common. According to the BBC, the firm claims it never sells information and never stores information.

Yet, that firm is one of thousands that do quizzes on everything from your Disney princess soulmate to the best cat for you.

An evil app could gather information from your mobile phone, even if you did the quiz on a desktop computer. It could take control of your tablet microphone, detect your phone carrier, and log your entire shopping history.

Then the company could sell that information to other companies that might not be honest.

Think twice before you click on quizzes that could give away all or part of your passwords: Dog and cat names, family names and street names, among others.

Better body composition has been linked to cancer survival

Increased muscle mass along with decreased levels of excess fat has been shown to help improve the chances of surviving cancer, according to a recent study from Kaiser Permanente, the University of Alberta, and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

The chance of mortality among those with muscle deficiency was 41 percent, while those with excess body fat showed a rate of 35 percent. More alarming, however, is that those with body compositions that included both risk factors succumbed to cancer in 89 percent of cases.

Researchers have often studied the link between body size and cancer survival rates in the past, but traditionally they have used the body mass index (BMI) as the method of analyzing the body. By using CT scans of the abdominal portion of the body, specifically the third lumbar vertebra of the lower back, the researchers were able to see a more accurate breakdown of both muscle and fat tissues in the body. They concluded that such a measurement led to better prognostic information than using BMI alone.

Despite the strong correlation between having a better body mass composition and lowered risk of breast cancer-related death, the true causation cannot be revealed by this study alone, according to Forbes. It is possible that those with less muscle simply had more aggressive forms of cancer that wouldn't respond to treatment and were therefore more lethal regardless of their starting mass.

According to the National Institutes of Health, cancer cachexia, the progressive loss of both fat and muscle loss among cancer patients, is responsible for about a quarter of all cancer deaths and having a larger stockpile of healthy body mass to lose could be a necessary defense for survival.

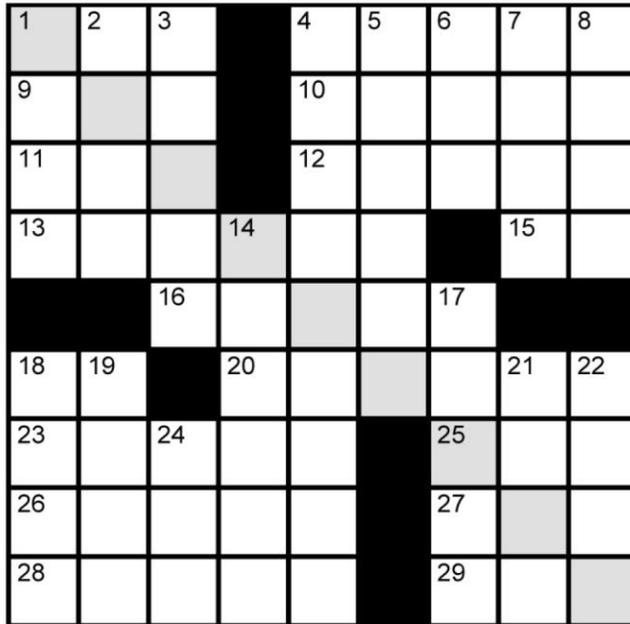
Recognized political independence

Across

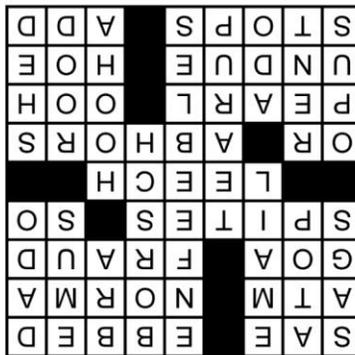
1. Manuscript encl.
4. Receded
9. 20s dispenser
10. Marilyn Monroe's real first name
11. African antelope
12. Swindle
13. Treats with malice
15. Thus
16. Bloodsucker
18. Either's partner
20. Loathes
23. June birthstone
25. "___ Baby Baby" (Linda Ronstadt hit)
26. Excessive
27. Furrow maker
28. Breaks off
29. Build (on)

Down

1. Droops
2. At the peak
3. In-box contents
4. Weakens
5. Beet soup
6. Lingerie item
7. Outback birds



8. Carpenter's groove
14. Shred
17. Fuss
18. Creative work
19. Monthly budget item
21. Cross
22. Outbuilding
24. Big deal



The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Trivia Teaser - Eggs-actly

1. Which performer emerged from a large plastic egg for her opening performance at the 2011 Grammy Awards? a-Lady Gaga, b- Beyoncé, c-Demi Lovato, d-Britney Spears.

2. Dr. Eggman is a villain in which video game series? a-The Legend of Zelda, b-Super Mario Brothers, c-Sonic the Hedgehog, d-Banjo Kazooie.

3. Which flightless bird lays the largest eggs in relation to its body size? a-Penguin, b-Ostrich, c-Rhea, d-Kiwi.

4. Which method of painting uses a pigment mixed with egg yolk? a-Gouache, b-Grisaille, c-Impasto, d-Tempera.

5. The Shuvalov Palace, housing the world's largest collection of works by Peter Carl Faberge - including his fabulous Faberge Eggs - is located in which Russian city? a-Omsk, b-Kiev, c-St. Petersburg, d-Moscow.

6. Who played the villain Egghead in five episodes of the 1960s "Batman" TV series? a-David Wayne, b-Roddy McDowall, c-Walter Slezak, d-Vincent Price.

7. A young hooligan nicknamed Eggsy is given a chance to become a government agent in which movie? a-"Spy Kids," b-"Kingsman: The Secret Service," c-"The Pacifier," d-"The Spy Next Door."

8. Which star in the constellation Lyra rotates so quickly it causes the star to become egg-shaped? a-Altair, b-Betelgeuse, c-Vega, d-Sirius.

9. "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss uses exactly 50 different words. What is the longest word in the book? a-Category, b-Anywhere, c-Something, d-Dollhouse.

10. Who hatched from an egg created after Leda was seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan? a-Circe, b-Echo, c-Helen of Troy, d-Eurydice.

Take the Trivia Challenge!

When was the first fancy cat show organized?

- a. 1800
- b. 1871
- c. 1892
- d. 1900

HINT: The answer is hidden somewhere in this newsletter.

- 1-a. Lady Gaga
- 2-c. Sonic the Hedgehog
- 3-d. Kiwi
- 4-d. Tempera
- 5-c. St. Petersburg
- 6-d. Vincent Price
- 7-b. "Kingsman: The Secret Service"
- 8-c. Vega
- 9-b. Anywhere
- 10-c. Helen of Troy

Answers to 'Eggs-actly'

*"But godliness with contentment is a great gain."
- 1 Timothy 6:6*